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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1187
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
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RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//JF/UNMA//
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J3//
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFIUU/COMSOCCENT MACDILL AFB FL
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2661
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2805
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 6114
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 1486

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 003001

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

RELEASABLE TO NATO/AUST/NZ/ISAF

STATE FOR SA/FO DAS GASTRIGHT
SA/A, S/CR, SA/PB, S/CT, EUR/RPM
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN
OSD FOR BREZINSKI
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76, POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: KHOWST DLEGATION PRESS FOR NEW
PROVINCIAL LEADERSHIP

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: A delegation of elders and a parliamentarian from Khowst Province told A/DCM and PRTOFF June 19 that Governor Merajuddin Pathan's administration is overrepresented by former Communist government officials, leading to weakening of GOA legitimacy in Khowst. The group warned anti-coalition militias (ACM) are exploiting what they described as an unrepresentative, vengeful, and corrupt Pathan Administration to undermine support for the GOA and, by association, the USG. Post will continue to evaluate all views on Khost governor and while there may be a kernel of truth in these views, they appear over blown.
END SUMMARY.

Pathan Administration Rife with Communist Holdovers

¶2. (SBU) A/DCM and PRTOFF met with Parliamentarian Mawlawi Hanif Shah al-Hussaini (Khowst, Lower House/Wolesi Jirga) and the following Khowst elders June 19: Haji Assil Kahn, Mir Sardar Zadran, Haji Muzarak, and Mirajan Sahiqi. Although the delegation stopped short of accusing Khowst Governor Merajuddin Pathan personally of Communist sympathies, they claimed Pathan has surrounded himself with dubious advisors, tainted by their association with the former Communist regime. Haji Assil Kahn claimed only four Khowst

leadership positions (i.e. sub-governors, directors, security chiefs) are held by ex-mujahidin, with the rest going to Communist government holdovers. Mir Sardar Zadran asserted no other province has such a disproportionate number of ex-Communist government officials. (NOTE: Delegates failed to define what they meant by ex-Communist "officials;" it is likely they are employing a broad definition that includes anyone on the government payroll. END NOTE.)

Ex-Mujahidin Targeted for Revenge; Fingered to CF

¶3. (SBU) The group asserted Communist government leaders are now in prominent positions in Khowst's security leadership (ANA, ANP, and NDS) and are taking revenge on "innocent" ex-mujahidin trying to reintegrate into society through the GOA's Program for Strengthening Peace (PTS). Because of a climate of fear induced by job discrimination, beatings, and false accusations of ACM sympathies to coalition forces, ex-mujahidin are forced to either stay in their homes or flee to Pakistan. (NOTE: Delegates repeatedly referred to reintegrated fighters as ex-mujahidin, never ex-Taliban. END NOTE.) Kahn also accused members of the Pathan administration of passing information to their old KGB allies, among others, now in the Russian intelligence service.

¶4. (SBU) Zadran said Coalition Forces (CF) are undermining their credibility by detaining suspects falsely referred to them by GOA

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forces. The group provided a Red Cross report concerning an incarcerated man in Bagram Air Force Base presumably being held unjustly for ACM suspicions. A/DCM said he knew that some of the accusations CF receives are based on vendettas, which makes evaluating this challenging. He added that Coalition Forces do everything possible to avoid false detainments, but are obliged to follow up on all leads.

Pathan/"Enemies of Islam" Must Go

¶5. (SBU) The delegation repeatedly expressed gratitude for USG aid and the USG's long friendship with Afghanistan. However, they lamented a perceived change in USG position by supporting governor's like Pathan, who are surrounded by "enemies of Islam." Al-Hussaini added the GOA and USG are damaging their reputations and "defaming the mujahidin dead" by bringing ex-Communists back to leadership positions. He advocated purging the entire Khowst administration, although the rest of the group favored retaining some officials. The delegation agreed, however, that the USG should support a leadership change in Khowst. The A/DCM explained the GOA, not the USG, is responsible for appointing GOA officials and emphasized the necessity of old enemies working together to move Afghanistan forward.

¶6. (SBU) The group also complained that Governor's should pay more attention of local elder opinion and be better acquainted with local tradition, hinting, but not directly stating that Pathan's 20-year history in the U.S. damaged his credibility. They also criticized Pathan's links to local tribes and leaders, stating that a new governor should be appointed without strong area links. The group said they expressed these concerns to various

Karzai administration officials and to Ambassador Khalilzad. Al-Hussaini plans to promote measures to strengthen Provisional Councils and require Governors to serve outside of their home regions.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: Governor Pathan can't win with this group. He's both too familiar with the area to be impartial and simultaneously too much of an outsider because of his years living in the U.S. Though Post has heard most of these complaints before, the group provided only anecdotal evidence of corruption, disrespect for local culture, or abuse to reformed insurgents. A/DCM and PRTOFF have no prior contact with these sources and suspect the reliability of their accusations. We will continue to talk with critics of the Governor and investigate their complaints, but given Governor Pathan's history of support for Coalition Forces and GOA objectives, we are inclined to give him the benefit of the doubt. However, on one occasion A/DCM heard the same complaints voiced by Professor Sayyuf perhaps because he heard them from the same source.

¶8. (U) Dushanbe minimize considered.

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